

# Career Profile

**Name:** Annette Taylor

**Job Title:** Administrative Officer

**Job Description:**

I manage the budget for all eight refuges. I make purchases for the refuges and work on personnel activities too. I work hard to balance the budget.

This job requires that I be extremely organized and focused on details. It also helps to enjoy working with lots of different people.

**Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

I have managed the budget for the Gulf oil spill. I am buying all the equipment and supplies needed by staff working on the spill. I am tracking over-time and making sure everyone gets paid for their spill work.

**Career Path:**

I began my career with an associates degree in computers. I started as a clerk for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From there, I moved up to a typist, then to a secretary, and then to an administrative assistant.

To become the Administrative Officer, I had to return to school and earn 24 credits in accounting and management.

**Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

Earn an associates or bachelor's degree in accounting and/or management.

**Why do you like working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I enjoy the variety of this job; everyday is different. I work with law enforcement, biologists, educators, fire staff, refuge operations staff and more to order their equipment and manage their budgets. I learn so much about wildlife and habitat and what the staff on the refuge is doing. I find it challenging and fascinating. It is like putting together pieces of a puzzle.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Byron Fortier

**Job Title:** Supervisory Park Ranger

## **Job Description:**

I have a variety of duties. First, I manage the visitor center. This involves coordinating and recruiting volunteers to lead tours and greet visitors, overseeing building operations and the gift shop. I coordinate the exhibit planning and development for the center and plan the canoe trips and oversee the education programs. I am also the main contact for our Friends Group. Together, we write grants to support refuge projects and coordinate public events.

## **Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

I wrote the oil spill factsheets for the Breton and Delta National Wildlife Refuges. I was a primary media contact. I served as the Refuge contact at the Ft. Jackson bird rehabilitation facility.

## **Career Path:**

I had a life changing experience my senior year of college. I decided to take a seasonal job at Yellowstone National Park in the marina concession shop before finishing my last year of college. I was studying for a bachelor's degree in business administration. That experience opened my eyes that I really wanted to work in natural resources. I finished my degree but decided to pursue a Master's degree in parks and recreation management.

I continued with the National Park Service in seasonal jobs because it is very difficult to get a permanent job. Finally, I decided that I needed a full-time job and returned to my home state of Louisiana where I worked for an outdoor store in New Orleans for one year. At last, I got a break and was hired in a permanent position at a National Park Historic Site in New Orleans. I stayed there for 12 years but decided I wanted to move up the career ladder and started looking for other opportunities. That's when I started working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in visitor services and worked my way up to my current position.

## **Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

- A college degree is essential. It can be in a wide variety of fields.
- Perseverance. Hang in there and keep applying. Apply for positions that may not be your dream job. You can then plan to work your way towards your career goal.

## **Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I feel like I am doing something that is extremely important. I'm not just earning a paycheck. I am working to establish a feeling of ownership for this refuge complex among the public. The value and charm of refuges may be less obvious to the public, than a national park, so education and communication at these refuge sites is even more important.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Bruce Mitchell

**Job Title:** Engineering Equipment Operator

**Job Description:**

I operate and maintain all heavy equipment. With this equipment, I maintain the roads, levees, and parking lots on the refuge.

**Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

I maintained the equipment that was being used for the oil spill.

**Career Path:**

After high school, I worked for a road construction company. I started flagging traffic and maintaining equipment. Slowly I worked my way up to an equipment operator position. It took me over 10 years to work my way up.

One of the companies I worked for had contracts on the refuge. I got to know the folks on the refuge doing the contract work. We struck a good relationship and when a position came open they let me know about it. I got the job and have been with the USFWS for 7 years.

**Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in job like yours?**

I recommend taking college courses to jump-start your career. They now offer courses in construction management and heavy equipment operation that were not available when I started in this career.

**Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I like the variety of work. Everything is different day to day. Also, I like the independence of the work and being able to work with little supervision.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Danny Breau

**Job Title:** Refuge Manager

## **Job Description:**

I am the refuge manager for the Big Branch Marsh, Bogue Chitto, and Atchafalaya Refuges. My job is to supervise the refuge staff of biologists, educators, equipment operators, and foresters. I oversee the biology, education, and forestry programs, guiding the development of the refuge, and improving and maintaining the facilities.

## **Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

- I filled in for my staff working on the oil spill. For example, I was doing endangered red-cockaded woodpecker surveys and guiding contractors working on brush removal.
- Flew on helicopter details searching for oiled wildlife and identifying the location, type, and quantity of oil close to coast and important wildlife areas.
- Guided BP's placement of the oil booms to protect wildlife such as the beach-nesting Wilson's plover.
- Worked at Incident Command to improve communications between USFWS and other oil recovery partners.
- Searched for oil on the refuges I'm responsible for and monitored the clean-up.
- Monitored nesting colonies while BP was cleaning-up.

## **Career Path:**

In high school, I wanted to be a veterinarian. So, I began in college in veterinary medicine with idea to work on wildlife, not just cats and dogs. But, after volunteering to help a zoo vet, I learned that was not what I wanted to do. So I switched my major to wildlife biology.

After school, I decided I wanted to work for a federal agency because I believed in the broader mission of public lands. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was the first one to call for an interview for a forestry position. I worked as a forester on the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge. That work also included overall management duties too. This was good experience and allowed me to successfully obtain my current position.

## **Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

Volunteer. It is important to become known to refuge staff for good work.  
Internships. Apply for internships in high school and college.

## **Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I believe in the mission to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The job is satisfying. I like the variety of job duties, the people I work with, and the mission I am working for.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Dave Demeyere

**Job Title:** Fire Management Officer

**Job Description:**

My staff and I are prepared and ready to respond and/or assist others with wildfires. We also have to keep our equipment in working order and ready-to-go. I write and implement prescribe fire plans to reduce fire hazards and manage wildlife habitat. I train staff.

**Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

I flew in helicopters over the spill area doing aerial surveys for injured wildlife.

**Career Path:**

I have a bachelor's degree in park recreation and resource management. I began working for the USDA Forest Service as a Park Ranger with some fire duties. Then I worked as a Forestry Technician for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I had opportunities to work on fires and decided that I wanted to pursue fire-specific positions. So, I took a job with the Bureau of Land Management as a Fire Operations Specialist. From there I worked my way to become a Fire Management Officer with the USFWS. All my fire training was on the job.

**Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

- Go to college!
- Study a natural resource field.
- Try lots of different things to figure out what you like doing in natural resources.
- Volunteer and look for internships.

**Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I like the mission of the Service. I like the small size of the Service and working with the people in the Service. Of all the federal natural resource agencies I have worked for, I enjoy working for the Service the most.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Ken Litzenberger

**Job Title:** Project Leader of the Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex

**Job Description:**

I manage all eight refuges in the complex. As the leader of this complex, it is my job to make sure all of the refuges are functioning and meeting their goals. These goals may include providing opportunities for fishing and hunting, providing quality environmental education programs, maintaining roads, building, and equipment, managing habitat, planning and executing prescribed fires. I also need to make sure we have qualified people and the people have the tools they need to get these jobs done.

**Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

My staff and I have worked very closely with BP to make sure the booms to control the oil were in place where we need them to protect our refuges. We also are instructing BP on where and how to clean up, being extra conscientious of the special needs to protect the habitat and wildlife on the refuges. We've also been communicating with the news media and giving tours.

**Career Path:**

After school I joined the military. After serving, I returned to school and earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in wildlife management. After school, I began working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a refuge manager trainee and worked my way up to become a refuge complex project leader.

**Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

- Volunteer, look for internships, and get experience anyway you can.
- Apply for a variety of jobs, even if they are not exactly what you want or you feel you are overqualified for. This will give you experience and get you into the agency. Once you are working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, you can more easily apply for other jobs.

**Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Even after 30 years, I still find my job for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service satisfying and rewarding. I like making a difference for natural resources that will be here forever for the public to enjoy.

# Career Profile

**Name:** Laura Thomas

**Job Title:** Administrative Assistant

**Job Description:**

I perform a wide variety of jobs. Because I sit at the front desk, I am the first point of contact for visitors who call or come to the office. I answer their questions about the refuge and tell them about recreation activities. I inventory and manage refuge property. I oversee payroll making sure it is submitted on time and I help staff with their time sheets. I arrange travel for staff and submit their paperwork for reimbursement. I also serve as the computer technician for the refuge complex, assisting with program and software problems.

**Your role in the oil spill recovery:**

I answered and directed phone calls from the media and the public. I handled the extra travel, purchases, and payroll paperwork.

**Career Path:**

In high school, I worked as a file clerk for a credit bureau. After high school, I moved up to the legal claims department. Later, I worked for a medical office billings and collection. Then, I started working for the Department of Defense when my husband, who was in the military, was transferred overseas. I started as a library technician and moved up to be the administrative assistant for the commander of flight operations at the base.

I began working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after my husband retired. I applied for the job here at the refuge.

I did not finish my degree but took a number of classes in business, computers, and psychology that have helped me in my job.

**Can you make one recommendation to a young person interested in a job like yours?**

- Learn to manage your time well. Take classes to learn to organize and manage your time better.
- You must be willing to work with refuge staff who have diverse needs.
- I recommend classes in business, computers (especially software & programming), and psychology.

**Why do you like working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service?**

I would recommend working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I enjoy working with professional people who love their jobs. It creates a great working environment. I like the variety in my work and helping others. I also really enjoy getting to work in other areas of the refuge like helping plant trees, working at special events, and with environmental education programs.